

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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R 171040 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3946

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJECT: GOJ DECIDES TO DEFER SUBMISSION OF ELECTORAL REFORM BILLS

REF: TOKYO 5900 TOKYO 6097

SUMMARY: PRIMIN TANAKA SUFFERED MAJOR POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT MAY 16 IN ACCEPTING WHAT GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE INEVITABLE POSTPONEMENT OF SUBMISSION OF CONTROVERSIAL ELECTORAL REFORM BILL TO CURRENT SESSION OF DIET, TERM OF WHICH DUE TO EXPIRE MAY 20. FORMAL DECISION TO DEFER SUBMISSION OF BILL TAKEN IN LATE AFTERNOON EXTRAORDINARY CABINET SESSION CALLED BY PRIMIN AFTER SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH LDP AND DIET LEADERS, MOST OF WHOM URGED CAUTIOUS RETREAT. GOJ DECISION CTEARED WAY FOR LDP LEADERS TO CONCENTRATE ON SECURING EXTENSION OF NURRENT DIET SESSION AND END TO OPPOSITION PARTY BOYCOTT WHICH HAS HATED ALL DIET PROCEEDINGS SINCE TAST FRIDAY. MEANTIME, OPPOSTION PARTY BOYCOTT CONTINUES MAY 1, AMID EXPECTATIONS THAT IT WILL BE SOON ENDED. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS, LOWER HOUSE SPEAFER UMEKICHI NAKAMURA AND UPPER HOUSE PRESIDENT KENZO KONO CALLED ON PRIMIN EARLY AFTERNOON MAY 17 TO REQUEST STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD REFRAIN FROM SUBMITTING ELECTORAL REFORM BILL TO CURRENT SESSION OF DIET BECAUSE OF GREATER URGENCY OF DELIBERATION OF GREAT BACKLOG OF OTHER PENDING

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LEGISLATION. IN EXPLAINING THAT THIS IN BEST INTEREST OF NORMALIZING DIET SITUATION THEY CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT SUCH STATEMENT REQUIRED TO BRING OPPOSITION PARTY BOYCOTT TO END AND TO NEGOTIATE EXTENSION OF SESSION. THEY ALSO PRESENTED SIMILAR

VIEWS TO LDP EXECUTIVE BOARD.

2. PRIMIN TANAKA CALLED EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF CABINET TO CONSIDER ISSUE. AT ITS CONCLUSION CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SUSUMU NIKAI DO INFORMED PRESS THAT GOJ HAD DECIDED TO DEFER SUBMISSION OF ELECTORAL REFORM BILL IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST BY SPEAKERS OF BOTH HOUSES. HOWEVER, HE ALSO SAID THAT IT NATURAL FOR GOJ TO RESPECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM STUDY COUNCIL, AND THAT GOJ WOULD THEREFORE CONTINUE TO STUDY QUESTION OF REVISION OF PRESENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM. LDP EXECUTIVE BOARD ALSO ENDORSED CABINET DECISION REPORTED TO IT BY NIKAI DO.

3. NIKAI DO INFORMED LOWER HOUSE STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTORS OF GOJ DECISION LATER IN EVENING, AND REQUESTED THEIR COOPERATION IN NORMALIZING DIET. OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS WERE REPORTED, HOWEVER, TO HAVE AGREED ONLY TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS IN STEERING COMMITTEE SESSION THURSDAY. JSP AND JCP SPOKESMEN SERVED SEPARATE NOTICE OF INTENT TO CONTINUE PROTEST AGAINST ELECTORAL REFORM IN AND OUTSIDE DIET UNTIL GOJ HALTS HOME AFFAIRS MINISTRY PREPARATIONS TO DRAFT BILLS AND DISBAN DS LOWER HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL DISTRICT REDISTRICTING. OPPOSITION PARTY DIET POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN SCHEDULED TO MEET THURSDAY TO DISCUSS RESPONSE TO LATEST GOJ MOVES.

4. PRIMIN HAS THUS CLEARED WAY FOR AGREEMENT ON EXTENSION OF DIET SESSION, BUT FEW OBSERVORS EXPECT IT TO BE FOR 100 DAYS AS ORIGINALLY REQUESTED BY GOJ. GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT COMPROMISE WILL BE REACHED WITHIN RANGE OF 60 - 70 DAYS, PARTICULARLY SINCE LONGER EXTENSION WOULD CONTINUE SESSION BEYOND DATE SET FOR PRIMIN TANAKA VISIT TO WASHINGTON, AND IT NOTED THAT THERE NO PRECEDENT FOR DIET TO PERMIT ABSENCE OF PRIMIN FOR TRAVEL ABROAD DURING SESSION.

5. IT NOTEWORTHY THAT SANKEI SHIMBUN ( WIDELY CONSIDERED TO SPEAK FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP) ENDORSED ELECTORAL REFORM IN EDITORIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAY 16 BUT OPENLY CHIDED PRIMIN TANAKA FOR RUSHING AHEAD ALONE AT WRONG TIME WITHOUT TAKING ESSENTIAL PROPER STEPS TO PREPARE WAY FOR IT. SANKEI ADVISED THAT HE GIVE PRIORITY TO NORMALIZATION OF DIET PROCEEDINGS AND EXTENSION OF SESSION THROUGH TALKS WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES, AND TO DELIBERATION OF KEY BILLS PENDING. MEANTIME, SANKEI ADVISED, GOJ SHOULD CONTINUE DRAFTING ELECTORAL REFORM BILLS FOR SUBMISSION TO NEXT EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF DIET, TO BE CALLED AS EARLY AS FALL, AT WHICH TIME PRIMIN SHOULD BE PREPARED TO STAKE HIS POLITICAL LIFE ON ITS PASSAGE.

6. COMMENT: THERE LITTLE ROOM FOR DOUBT THAT PRIMIN TANAKA SERIOUSLY EMBARRASSED BY HIS HANDLING OF ELECTORAL REFORM ISSUE, AND DECISION HE LITERALLY OBLIGED TO TAKE TO DEFER SUBMISSION OF BILL. AS INDICATION OF FAR- REACHING CONSEQUENCES SPECULATION ALREADY FAINTLY AUDIBLE THAT DESPITE EARLIER INDICATIONS THAT HE WOULD NOT DO SO PRIMIN MAY RESHUFFLE LDP TOP THREE LEADER POSTS ( SEC GEN, CHAIRMEN EXECUTIVE AND POLICY BOARDS) AT CONVENIENT TIME AFTER END OF EXTENDED DIET SESSION, AND CABINET AS WELL. ROLES OF LDP MAJORFACTION LEADERS ( ALL IN CABINET) NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR, BUT THROUGHOUT WEEK FEW OF THEM SHOWED MUCH EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FOR PRIMIN. FONMIN OHIRA CREDITED BY SOME COMMENTATORS WITH HELPING TURN PRIMIN AROUND MONDAY WHEN HE SAID TO HAVE URGED TANAKA TO HANDLE ISSUE WITH PRUDENCE. MEMBERS OF FUKUDA FACTION REPORTED TO BE SMARTING OVER INTRA-PARTY CRITICISM THAT ITS LEADING MEMBERS PRODDED PRIMIN INTO MIS- STEP. FOR NOW, HOWEVER, PRIMIN ALONE MUST BEAR BRUNT OF CRITICISM FOR SNARLING DIET IN ITS LAST WEEKS WITH VIRTUAL SINGLE- HANDED ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE COMPLEX ELECTORAL REVISION WITHOUT ADEQUATELY CULTIVATING OZN PARTY OR PUBLIC OPINION IN ADVANCE FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUNDEMENTAL REFORM. INGERSOLL

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